



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ! May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts! (Colossians 3:15)

### THE CHALLENGE

Are you ready to put God first in your finances? So many people encounter God's amazing blessing when they tithe, but as we know sometimes the first step is the hardest. That's why we are accepting the tithing challenge from Jesus this season. Put God front and center of your finances this fall, and you will experience His amazing faithfulness.

### THE FIRST AND BEST

The Holy Bible invites us to give our *first* and our *best* back to God and He promises He will bless the rest! This first and best is the tithe, or tenth (1/10) of our income. We return to the Lord 10% of what He's given and blessed us with, because it belongs to Him. The tithe is a very practical and tangible way to put God first. If you are not tithing already, or you are tithing less than 5%, a great way to start is this fall to increase your tithe by 1%. For example, if you make \$34,000 per year, and you currently tithe 0%, that equals...you guessed it, \$0 of what belongs to the Lord. If you tithe 1%, that equals \$340 per year. There are 52 weeks in a year, and so divide \$340 by 52, and you get \$6.50 per Sunday. \$6.50!! That is a Starbucks Latte!

Tithing is a biblical principle that invites God's blessing on our lives and families as we put Him first in our finances. Read Malachi, Chapter 3. In this chapter God challenges people to challenge Him in generosity: *"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. **Test me in this...and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it"** (Malachi 3:10).* The Word of God says we can take the promises of God to the bank. When we give our first and best back to God, He promises to bless the rest. I truly believe that a generous lifestyle is what we all need. I try to model this in my own life. I wake up, get coffee, park myself in front of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, pray, and then off to celebrate 8:00am Mass and then get after the day. Mother Teresa said, "I know I would not be able to work one week if it were not for that continual force coming from Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament during my Holy Hour of Adoration." When we give ourselves to Jesus, we are recharged! I try to model this in my finances as well. This is not about increasing the Sunday offering. This is about giving to God what belongs to Him.

By increasing your tithe by at least 1% this fall and beyond you are making the right decision. You will have indicators in your life that say it is the wrong decision (bills, car repairs, family stuff, etc!), so just put tithing on the back burner. The truth is, it doesn't have to be this way; give God a chance to be first and best. While it is *optional*, every household that fills out the **St. Mary 2019 Fall Tithe Challenge Form** will receive a free copy of *Searching for and Maintaining Peace: A Small Treatise on Peace of Heart* by Father Jacques Philippe. By giving us your email, we will send you weekly encouraging words of gratitude from Scripture, and invite you to share how God is blessing you.

If you currently tithe 5% or more, and you either have a testimony or feel like you want to share God's faithfulness to your household as a result of your loving obedience to His Word, let us know by emailing our Finance Council Chair, John Simpkins at [johnrsimpkins@gmail.com](mailto:johnrsimpkins@gmail.com).

Your life is busy these days, right? Not having cash or check on hand doesn't have to hold you back from giving. You can be faithful today by giving online. There is no organization with more potential to change the world than a local church! You can literally schedule your next gift in two minutes, and give your brain a break! You can schedule your giving at <https://stmarywilliamston.weshareonline.org/>.

Remember: You can never outgive God! And I love you all!

In Christ, through Mary,

Fr. Mark Rutherford

Pastor